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A-ONE #1424                                              06/22/12

~ Battle for Web Freedom! ~ People Are Talking!    ~ U.S. Cyber Pros!
~ Facebook Stock Rises!   ~ MS Tablet May Alienate ~ Free PS3 Shooter!
~ U.S. Kyoto Prize Winner ~ Facebook Mistakes Fix! ~ 3DS Larger Screen!

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->From the Editor's Keyboard              "Saying it like it is!"
   """""""""""""""""""""""""""



Third day of summer, third day of temperatures in the 90's - heat wave!
Well, it has been a fairly decent Spring as far as the weather goes, even
though the season has seemed to pass me by due to everything else going on
in my life lately!  But, things are slowly getting back to some semblance
of normal lately, so it's time to enjoy things as best as possible!

So, have recent presidential campaigning antics got your attention yet?
Truly interesting, as well as entertaining.  Watching the television
coverage reminds me of watching The Three Stooges and their slapstick
routines!  The next few months should be truly amazing!

Until next time...




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->In This Week's Gaming Section  - Leaked Xbox 720 Pricing and Details Likely Re
al!
   """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""    PlayStation 3 Consoles Get Free Shooter Game!

                                     Gamers Get Adults-Only R18+ Classification!
                                     And more!




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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   -  The Latest Gaming News!
   """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""



              Leaked Xbox 720 Pricing and Details Likely Real


Purported details surrounding Microsoft s next-generation Xbox video game
and home entertainment console emerged earlier this week when a 56-page
document leaked onto the Web. The supposed internal document pointed to a
$299 price point for Microsoft s  Xbox 720,  and it also outlined specs
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for the unit, including Blu-ray support and true 1080p output, as well as a new Kinect 2 motion and voice-based controller. The authenticity of the leaked file was questionable, however Microsoft s actions in the days that followed suggest that it is indeed the real deal.

Microsoft has reportedly sent take-down notices to a number of websites that were hosting the document. Covington & Burling, a law firm representing Microsoft, had the document pulled from file-hosting service Scribd on Monday, and notices have also been sent to other sites hosting the document, including popular cloud sync service Dropbox and Czech Republic-based tech blog Ihned.cz, which received the following note.

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xxxxxxxxxxx-XBox-720-9-24-Checkpoint-Draft-1.pptx

Microsoft s next-generation Xbox console is expected to launch ahead of the holidays next year, and it will likely be unveiled at the E3 2013 conference according to multiple reports.


Nintendo To Start Selling 3DS with Larger Screens


Japanese game maker Nintendo Co. has upgraded its 3DS handheld to sport a screen nearly twice as big as the previous model amid hot competition against smartphones and tablets that are wooing people away from dedicated gaming machines.

The Kyoto-based maker of the Super Mario games and Wii home console said Friday the Nintendo 3DS LL, called 3DS XL in overseas markets, goes on sale in Japan and Europe July 28, and in the U.S. from Aug. 19.

It will sell in Japan for 18,900 yen ($236) and $199.99 in the U.S. It did not give a price for Europe.

The 3DS, which has a touch panel and delivers 3-D imagery without special glasses, has two screens   one is 3.53 inches and the other is 3.02 inches.

The LL or XL version's screens are 4.88 inches and 4.18 inches, according to the company. Screen inches refer to the diagonal measurement so LL screens are 1.9 times bigger.

"There were demands for a bigger screen, and so we are ready to respond

with a size-variation model," Nintendo President Satoru Iwata said in a video on the company's website. "You can enjoy powerful 3D imagery."

It weighs a bit more and is slightly bigger than the previous model. But battery life was extended to up to six and a half hours for 3D games from the previous five hours, and up to 10 hours from eight hours for regular games.

Yusuke Tsunoda, analyst at Tokai Tokyo Securities Co., said bigger screens are generally almost always a plus for game machines sales, and the affordable price adds to the appeal.

"People who already have the 3DS and those who don't may but it. After all, it's so cheap," he said.

Nintendo and Japanese rival Sony Corp. with its PlayStation Vita handheld are fighting tough competition from smartphones and tablets, which allow users to not only play games but also spend time on social media and other entertainment.

The bigger screens may help differentiate Nintendo's handheld from other devices, but the upgraded screen is still smaller than the iPad.

Iwata has repeatedly shrugged off the threat from smartphones.

"Nintendo doesn't want to compete in a sector other than where it feels its strength lies," said Tsunoda.

Nintendo has sold 17 million 3DS machines worldwide so far. Sony has sold 1.8 million of its PS Vita machines.

Nintendo is also planning a new home console called Wii U for later this year. It will have a 6.2-inch touchscreen controller that works separately from what's on the TV monitor. But it won't work as a portable like the 3DS or 3DS LL.


PlayStation 3 Consoles Get Free Shooter Game


Sony on Wednesday launched a shooter title PlayStation 3 (PS3) users can play in an unprecedented blend of hard-core console and free casual gaming.

"No Man's Land" released on PlayStation Home network was billed by the Japanese entertainment and consumer electronics giant as a "first-of-its-kind" free-to-play multiperson shooter for videogame consoles.

Veteran developer VEEMEE tailored the game to capitalize on strengths of PS3 consoles and the Home network that is an online arena for players.

"VEEMEE saw a unique opportunity with PlayStation Home to evolve gaming by blending the immersive game play endemic to AAA games with the social and 'freemium' aspects of casual games," Sony said in a blog post.

Blockbuster console titles typically launch priced about $60 a copy while casual games played on smartphones, tablets or online social networks tend to be free with revenue generated by advertising or sales of in-game items or bonuses.

"No Man's Land" is set in a post-apocalyptic United States and lets players for teams to compete online in "time-tested kill-everything-that moves" death matches or to see who can salvage the most resources from the hostile land.

"Race through urban wastelands where chaos and disorder are ever-present, dodging enemy fire and exacting revenge on roaming bands of death-addicted warriors in a world gone mad," VEEMEE said in an online description of the game.

"Trust no one because it's not about who's right, it's about who's left."

Sony earlier this year began merging blockbuster console title action and popular free-to-play style gaming in its online community for PS3 users.

Sony Computer Entertainment America in March rolled out "Cutthroats: Battle for Black Powder Cove," which lets as many as 24 people at a time serve as gunners or captains of pirate ships out to sink one another in timed sessions.

"We truly think they are going to revolutionize freemium games on consoles," PS Home senior business manager Chris Mahoney told AFP at the time.

The videogame industry has been shaken up in recent years by the exploding popularity of online games that are free to play.

"When we look at gaming, we see hard-core experiences on one side of the spectrum and a more casual side with free-to-play type games," Mahoney said.

"We think that there is an area in between where you can blend together the best of both worlds."


## Gamers Get Adults-Only R18+ Classification


An adults-only computer game rating category will at last become a reality with legislation passing Federal Parliament.

The new law fulfils the Commonwealth's part of a deal with states and territories to include an R18+ rating in the games classification system.

"These are important reforms over 10 years in the making," Home Affairs Minister Jason Clare said.

"The R18+ category will inform consumers, parents and retailers about which games are not suitable for minors to play and will prevent minors from purchasing unsuitable material.

"The reforms also mean that adults are able to choose what games they play within the bounds of the law."

Previously, the highest rating for computer games has been MA15+ meaning overseas adult-only games are usually banned here or given a lower classification allowing children to obtain them.

The new laws bring computer games in line with the classification system for films and other material and make Australia more consistent with international standards.

They have received overwhelming support during years of consultation - one discussion paper received more than 58,000 submissions with most in favour.

Shadow attorney-general George Brandis said it made sense that Australia's classification regime would now be uniform "classifying all media according to a single set of criteria".

"The passage of this bill will no doubt be welcomed by adult gamers all across Australia," Senator Brandis told the Senate.

"The industry has been waiting for this change for some time."

The Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (R18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012 passed the Senate with bipartisan support.

The change has the backing of state and territory attorneys-general who agreed to the classification overhaul in mid-2011.

They'll pass their own complementary legislation to ensure that R18+ computer games are appropriately regulated.

The national classification scheme is scheduled to commence on January 1, 2013.


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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson


U.S., Israel Developed Flame Computer Virus


The United States and Israel jointly developed the Flame computer virus that collected intelligence to help slow Iran's nuclear program, The Washington Post reported on Tuesday, citing anonymous Western officials.

The so-called Flame malware aimed to map Iran's computer networks and monitor computers of Iranian officials, the newspaper said. It was designed to provide intelligence to help in a cyber campaign against Iran's nuclear program, involving the National Security Agency, the CIA and Israel's military, the Post said.

The cyber campaign against Iran's nuclear program has included the use of another computer virus called Stuxnet that caused malfunctions in Iran's nuclear enrichment equipment, the newspaper said.

Current and former U.S. and Western national security officials confirmed to Reuters that the United States played a role in creating the Flame

virus.

Since Flame was an intelligence "collection" virus rather than a
cyberwarfare program to sabotage computer systems, it required
less-stringent U.S. legal and policy review than any U.S. involvement in
offensive cyberwarfare efforts, experts told Reuters.

The CIA, NSA, Pentagon, and Office of the Director of National
Intelligence declined to comment.

Flame is the most complex computer spying program ever discovered.

Two leading computer security firms - Kaspersky Lab and Symantec Corp -
have linked some of the software code in the Flame virus to the Stuxnet
computer virus, which was widely believed to have been used by the United
States and Israel to attack Iran's nuclear program.


## Experts Warn of Shortage of U.S. Cyber Pros


Leading cyber experts warned of a shortage of talented computer security
experts in the United States, making it difficult to protect corporate and
government networks at a time when attacks are on the rise.

Symantec Corp Chief Executive Enrique Salem told the Reuters Media and
Technology Summit in New York that his company was working with the U.S.
military, other government agencies and universities to help develop new
programs to train security professionals.

"We don't have enough security professionals and that's a big issue. What
I would tell you is it's going to be a bigger issue from a national
security perspective than people realize," he said on Tuesday.

Jeff Moss, a prominent hacking expert who sits on the U.S. Department of
Homeland Security Advisory Council, said that it was difficult to persuade
talented people with technical skills to enter the field because it can be
a thankless task.

"If you really look at security, it's like trying to prove a negative. If
you do security well, nobody comes and says 'good job.' You only get
called when things go wrong."

The warnings come at a time when the security industry is under fire for
failing to detect increasingly sophisticated pieces of malicious software
designed for financial fraud and espionage and failing to prevent the
theft of valuable data.

Moss, who goes by the hacker name "Dark Tangent," said that he sees no end
to the labor shortage.

"None of the projections look positive," said Moss, who serves as chief
security officer for ICANN, a group that helps run some of the Internet's
infrastructure. "The numbers I've seen look like shortages in the 20,000s
to 40,000s for years to come."

Reuters last month reported that the National Security Agency was setting
up a new cyber-ops program at select universities to expand U.S. cyber
expertise needed for secret intelligence operations against computer

networks of adversaries. The cyber-ops curriculum is geared to providing the basic education for jobs in intelligence, military and law enforcement.

The comments echo those of other technology industry executives who complain U.S. universities do not produce enough math and science graduates.

U.S. defense contractor Northrop Grumman Corp on Monday launched the first undergraduate honors program in cybersecurity with the University of Maryland to help train more workers for the burgeoning field.

Salem pointed to British banks as one industry already struggling to find enough network security experts.

"Because there's such a concentration of financial services companies there, there's not enough security expertise already in London. We see it. Banks can't find enough security professionals," he said.

Moss, who founded the Defcon and Black Hat hacking conferences that are held in Las Vegas each summer, said that U.S. government agencies are so desperate to fill positions that they are poaching security experts from private firms.

In some cases, security firms have retaliated by refusing to send their most talented cyber experts on government jobs for fear of losing them. Instead they send their "B Team" consultants, Moss said.

Some companies have even begun writing non-poaching clauses into their contracts with clients to guard against losing their top cybersecurity talent.

Government officials from normally secretive agencies, including the National Security Agency, FBI and U.S. military, attend Defcon each year to recruit gifted hacking geeks who they might not otherwise be able to identify.


A Battle for Internet Freedom as UN Meeting Nears


A year after the Internet helped fuel the Arab Spring uprisings, the role cyberspace plays in launching revolutions is being threatened by proposed changes to a United Nations telecommunications treaty that could allow countries to clamp down on the free flow of information.

For months, dozens of countries have been meeting behind closed doors to debate changes to the 24-year-old treaty. The U.S. delegation to the World Conference on International Telecommunications to be held in Dubai this December has vowed to block any proposals that could permit online censorship or undercut the Internet's current governing structure.

Yet those assurances have failed to ease fears that bureaucratic tinkering with the treaty could imperil Internet freedom and diminish its role in economic growth, according to legal experts and civil liberties advocates who have been tracking the discussions.

Russia, for example, has proposed language that requires member states to ensure the public has unrestricted access and use of international

telecommunication services, "except in cases where international telecommunication services are used for the purpose of interfering in the internal affairs or undermining the sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and public safety of other states, or to divulge information of a sensitive nature," according to a May 3 U.N. document that details the various proposals for amending the treaty.

The wording of this provision could allow a country to cite a U.N. treaty as the basis for repressing political opposition. The provision also appears to contradict Article 19 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which says people shall have the right to access information "through any media and regardless of frontiers."

A senior U.N. official said Friday the amended treaty will not create any barriers to information online, but acknowledged that the Russian proposal has not yet been rejected. Any proposals that cannot be agreed to by all member states will not be included in the final document, said Hamadoun Toure, secretary general of the International Telecommunication Union, the U.N. agency that oversees the treaty.

An amended treaty would be binding on the United States if it is ratified by the Senate. But approval is not automatic. The treaty, known formally as the International Telecommunications Regulations, is sure to be scrutinized by lawmakers wary of its potential impact.

The ITU does not operate like the U.N. Security Council, where the United States has the power to veto resolutions to which it objects. The ITU works on a consensus basis. Proposals can be stopped from serious consideration if enough countries voice their objections. More than 190 nations will attend the Dubai conference and the U.S. delegation is seeking support for its positions at the preparatory meetings that will continue until the conference convenes.

"It is important that when we have values, as we do in the area of free speech and the free flow of information, that we do everything that we can to articulate and sustain those values," Philip Verveer, deputy assistant secretary of state and U.S. coordinator for international communications and information policy, said in an interview.

The drafting and debating of proposals in preparation for the Dubai conference have taken place largely in secret. Public interest groups have criticized the process and said it runs counter to development of sound public policy. In response to calls for transparency, two research fellows at George Mason University's Mercatus Center launched the website WCITLeaks.org earlier this month as a way to make leaked documents available publicly.

The secretive nature of the talks has sparked rumors the U.N. is plotting to take control of the Internet. Toure has called the takeover rumors "ridiculous."

Independent, nongovernmental organizations including the Internet Society, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, and the Worldwide Web Consortium have for years served as the Internet's governing bodies. They handle core tasks like network and domain name administration and establish Internet policies, standards and rules based on input from the public and private sectors. This system allows the Internet to evolve organically and react rapidly to changes in technology, business practices and consumer behavior, according to open Internet advocates.

Yet for countries still grappling with how communications have been transformed by the Internet, ITU and the treaty are viewed as the best avenues for plugging themselves into the global information economy. For developing nations that don't have an effective broadband infrastructure, bureaucratic and regulatory measures can allow them to benefit financially from the Internet traffic that electronically crosses their borders.

But treaties are static instruments that often are unable to adapt and adjust to the fast pace of Internet innovation, said Sally Shipman Wentworth, senior manager for public policy at the nonprofit Internet Society. "Further, we do not believe that we should simply take the 1988 regulatory model that applied to the old telephone system and apply it to the Internet," she said.

A proposal offered by a European association of telecommunications network operators would put pressure on content providers such as Google, Facebook and Netflix to offset the costs of delivering Internet traffic to end-users. That traffic increasingly includes bandwidth-hungry video, and the proposal from the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association essentially argues that the investment needed to expand and improve data delivery should be borne by the operators and the content providers.

Verveer called the proposal unworkable and said it would have unintended consequences, such as blocking Harvard, MIT and other universities from putting courses online at no cost to users in places where access to education is already limited. "If it became necessary to pay in order to make these courses available, they would predictably become less available, which would be very unfortunate," he said.

Even what appear to be minor alterations to the treaty can have far-reaching consequences. A coalition of Arab states has proposed expanding the treaty's definition of telecommunications by adding the word "processing." The change, if made, would expand the treaty's reach and "essentially swallow the Internet's functions with only a tiny edit to existing rules," Robert McDowell, a Republican member of the Federal Communications Commission, said late last month at a congressional hearing.


### Facebook Stock Has Highest Close Since May


Facebook closes at one of its highest prices since its initial public offering.

The stock rose $1.21, or 3.8 percent, to finish Friday at $33.05. It hasn't closed above that price since May 21, the second day of trading.

The stock finished the week up 10 percent, the second straight week of increase.

Facebook is still 14 percent below its IPO price of $38 a share.

Facebook's IPO has had a rocky ride. Its debut was delayed by trading glitches on the Nasdaq.

Investors have been concerned about its ability to increase revenue and make money from its growing mobile audience, though many analysts hold positive long-term opinions.

Facebook, along with investment banks that led the IPO, is the subject of dozens of shareholder lawsuits.


## Microsoft Tablet Risks Alienating PC Makers


With the unveiling of the Surface tablet, Microsoft is heading into unusual territory: competing with its partners, the very same companies that make Windows PCs. But Microsoft has little to lose, since PC manufacturers are having little success with their own tablets.

With the unveiling of its tablet this week Microsoft Corp. is taking up the competition with Apple Inc. and its iPad by borrowing a page from Apple's playbook. It is keeping both software and hardware development under the same roof.

"If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the compliments from Microsoft poured down like a torrential storm on Apple last night," said analyst Brian White at Topeka Capital Markets.

Even Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's famously tough-talking CEO sounded downright Zen and Apple-inspired as he introduced the Surface.

"We believe that any intersection between human and machine can be made better when all aspects of the experience   hardware and software   are considered and working together," he said at Monday's launch event in Los Angeles.

That's a new philosophy for Microsoft, a company accustomed to writing the software, charging loads of money for it, and letting others design the hardware. Microsoft has sold hardware before, most notably the Xbox game console, which is essentially a PC. But when it ventured into the game console market, it wasn't directly treading on the toes of the big PC makers who buy Windows from it. (The exception was Sony, which makes both PCs and PlayStation consoles.)

With Surface, Microsoft faces the challenge of selling the soon-to-be-launched Windows 8 to PC makers who want to make tablets, while at the same time selling tablets directly to consumers.

Rick Sherlund, an analyst at Nomura Securities said Microsoft's hardware partners "are no doubt unhappy" about the prospect of competing with Microsoft's tablets, particularly since Microsoft set a high bar with Surface.

Surface will come in two versions, both with screens measuring 10.6 inches diagonally, slightly larger than the iPad. One model will run on phone-style chips, just like the iPad, and will be sold for a similar price. Another, heavier and more expensive model, will run on Intel chips and be capable of running standard Windows applications.

Ballmer suggested that Microsoft is making hardware so it can kick-start Windows tablets and make sure they're competitive right from the get-go. But the company's long-term goals are unclear. Will Microsoft keep making

tablets, or will it declare victory at some point and leave the field to its hardware partners?

One sign of limited long-term commitment to making its own tablets is that Microsoft will be selling the tablets only from its own stores and website. That might leave space for other manufacturers to sell Windows tablets through Best Buy and other electronics stores.

Google Inc. is in a similar position. It makes Android, the software that powers most iPad competitors. But it has also acquired Motorola Mobility, a company that makes Android tablets and phones, so now finds itself competing with hardware partners like Samsung and HTC.

But Google has made clear that it will treat Motorola as a separate, "arms-length" business, and that it made the acquisition to get hold of Motorola's patents, which will provide legal cover not just for Google, but for other manufacturers who make Android devices.

Microsoft's position is complicated by the possibility that consumers will favor its tablet over other Windows tablets for exactly the reasons Ballmer articulated: it's made by the same company that wrote the software. That puts an end to the old Windows PC support runaround, where PC makers blame Microsoft for product failures, and Microsoft blames the PC makers. If something's wrong with Surface, buyers will know who to call.

Ronan de Renesse, an analyst at Analysys Mason, said Microsoft can afford to alienate PC makers when it comes to tablets, because they've captured such a small share of the market. Samsung Electronics and AsusTek Computer Inc. are the only PC makers who have appreciable market share in tablets, and they only make up 10 percent or so, by his estimate. Other major competitors to the iPad are Amazon.com Inc.'s Kindle and Barnes & Noble Inc.'s Nook.

"Microsoft's move in creating its own tablet is the sign that PC manufacturers have lost the game," Renesse said. "The big question is, if Surface becomes as successful as the iPad, will Microsoft choose to stop licensing Windows on tablets?"

Microsoft's partners are mum. Hewlett-Packard Co. and Acer, both of which make PCs and tablets, had no comment on Microsoft's announcement. Samsung did not respond to requests for comment.


US Computer Graphics Scientist Wins Kyoto Prize


An American regarded as the father of computer graphics, an Indian literary critic and a Japanese molecular cell biologist are winners of the annual Kyoto Prize, Japan's highest private award for global achievement.

The Inamori Foundation said Friday that U.S. computer scientist Ivan Sutherland won the advanced technology prize. Sutherland is perhaps best known for developing the Sketchpad in 1963. The graphics interface program that allowed users to manipulate figures on a screen through pointing a device  an innovation that helped people use computers without the need for complicated programming.

Gayatri Chakrovoty Spivak , an Indian literary critic and educator whose work focuses on those marginalized by Western culture, including

immigrants, the working class and women, won the arts and philosophy prize. A professor at Columbia University, she is known in literary circles for her essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" about the economically dispossessed.

Japan's Yoshinori Ohsumi, a molecular biologist at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, was awarded the basic sciences prize for his contributions in the significance of autophagy, now regarded as a vital cell-recycling system that may aid in future developments to treat neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, cancer and other age-related ailments.

The Inamori Foundation is a charitable body established in 1984 by the founder of Japanese electronic component maker Kyocera Corp., Kazuo Inamori.

Each laureate receives a diploma, a gold Kyoto Prize medal and a cash gift of 50 million yen ($630,000) at a ceremony in Kyoto in November.

## Ubuntu Abandons Dial-Up Users

Ubuntu, Kubuntu, Xubuntu Over at the Goodbye, Microsoft web site, Brad R. takes Ubuntu to task for abandoning dial-up modem users. Apparently Ubuntu no longer includes the GnomePPP dial-up package in the distribution, without which you can't get online via dial-up. It gets better: if you do have some way to connect, when you download something from the Ubuntu repository, the first thing Ubuntu does is update its 16+ megabyte repository index. Happy waiting! Brad concludes that "Ubuntu is for broadband users only."

## Facebook Allows Fix for Embarrassing Mistakes

For those embarrassing mistakes people make in their Facebook posts, there is finally some relief.

The giant social network said Friday it started allowing users to edit their comments, avoiding a more cumbersome deletion.

"For instance, if I join a thread and write a long comment but make a typo, I'll now be able to go edit it instead of having to delete it and repost," spokeswoman Johanna Peace said.

"We'll also be showing the editing history for a comment so that subsequent commenters or likers have the full context of the conversation. It's rolling out now and should be live to everyone in the next couple days."

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